

Biography for EEO Specialist Ronald Harris

Prior to beginning his career at EPA in 1986, Mr. Harris served in the U.S. Military at Fort Bragg, North Carolina where he served three years as a Material Management Accountant. After completing his active military obligations he then attended Middlesex College in Edison N.J. There he earned an AS degree in Police Science. Moving back to Chicago, he began his EPA Career in 1986 in the Region 5 Office, starting his career as a student intern, while continuing his education at DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois, majoring in Criminal Justice. In 1988, he became a full time employee with the EPA. His first assignment was a wage grade position that he held for two years. He then became a Property-Supply Specialist in the Resources Management Division. He held this position for sixteen years. Yearning to continue his personal growth, he then took a detail to the Grants Office, after this detail, he then became a Labor Relations Specialist in the Human Resources Office, where he served another year. He then became an EEO Specialist in the Office of Civil Rights in 2003, and rose to the title of EEO Officer.

As Mr. Harris experiences grew, so did his grade, eventually he rose to the grade of GS-13. While working at EPA, Mr. Harris continued his military service in the U.S. Reserves and in 1991 he was mobilized for Operation Desert Storm. His experiences as an EEO officer included providing consultation and advice to regional supervisors, managers, employees and applicants on matters related to accommodating and hiring individuals with mental and physical disabling conditions. This includes assessing disability accommodations request for regional Bargaining and Non-Bargaining employees. He served as the regional subject matter expert for disability accommodations. His additional duties include managing the Regions Affirmative Action plan. This includes identifying and taking actions designed to eliminate institutional barriers to equal opportunity, sexual harassment, and hostile working environments. Further duties include ensuring that EEO complaints are handled in a timely and appropriate manner to include the informal counseling stages and advising employees, managers, and supervisors on their roles in the EEO process. This includes overseeing eight collateral duty EEO counselors and ensuring reports are coherent and factual.

As a Labor Relations Specialist he taught; Counseled, Advised, and Provided Formal Training, Technical Advice, and Guidance to Federal Managers and Supervisors on conducting various disciplinary actions. These actions include; Drafting Warning Letters, Leave Restrictions, AWOL's, Terminations, Performance Assistance Plans (PAP's), Performance Improvement Plans (PIPS), Labor Relations Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, Prepared management negotiating teams, Investigated Grievances and Unfair Labor Practices, Facilitated Settlement Agreement language for settlements involving EEO complaints, Unfair Labor Practices, and Negotiated Grievances complaints. He also facilitated the quarterly Region 5, training program for EPA Federal Managers and Supervisors. The training consisted of issues dealing with; Merit System Principles, Avoiding EEO complaints, Handling Grievances, Whistle Blowers Laws, Union Rights under 5 U.S.C. 7114, Managers Rights under 5 U.S.C. 7106, The Americans with Disability Laws (ADA), The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA).